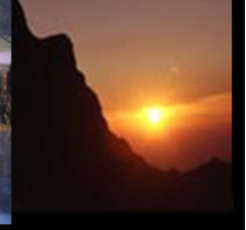


NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT NEWS



CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES

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Summer 2004

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Special Points of Interest

- Flathead Outdoors Radio Show is aired every Saturday morning at 8:15 on KERR 750 AM and KQRK FM.
- Tribal Web site at www.cskt.org
- Native American Fish & Wildlife Society Pacific Region will meet Oct. 31 through Nov. 3 in Polson at the KwaTaqNuk
- Shoreline Protection Board will meet Sept. 10 at Pablo - Lefthand Rm



2004 RIVER HONORING

The 2004 River Honoring was held during the blustery spring days of May 11th, 12th and 13th on the Lower Flathead River. The gathering began with a barbecue, followed by an awards presentation to the 2004 River Honorees. Drumming and singing, barbecue and awards presentation drew over 100 people for the second year.

On May 12 & 13 nearly 1,200 fourth and fifth graders traveled from all across the Reservation to attend the two-day environmental education event. The River Honoring provided an opportunity to increase public awareness and community involvement in the preservation of natural and cultural resources on the Lower Flathead River.



The Tribal Division of Fire is once again a River Honoring favorite station. Staff teach fire safety.

The River Honoring combined tribal and community resource specialists and educators such as natural and cultural resource representatives.

News from the Department Head

I am honored to present this late summer edition of the NRD Newsletter. I talked about our busy schedule this past spring and it seems that the busy schedule has carried on into the summer. I am proud of the excellent professional staff we have and it is always exciting to see all of the great projects.

Since our last Newsletter the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the USFWS have concluded a draft Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to perform certain

activities at the national Bison Range Complex. We are currently in the middle of a 90 day public comment period, which will end October 12, 2004. Following the public comment period, there will be a 90-day Congressional review period and barring any major complications, we will be ready to implement the AFA at that time. These are exciting times and we look forward to this opportunity to take another step in defining sovereignty and self-governance here on the Flathead Reservation. As we go through this pe-

riod of public review and comment I am constantly reminded that we must continue to make strong, positive efforts to provide public education about even the most fundamental elements of Tribal Government. Each of us can help by being knowledgeable about foundations of Tribal government and by sharing that knowledge. Even the most basic information can help people understand more about Tribal programs and initiatives. We can each play a small role in the education process. My best wishes for a safe summer.

Trumpeter Swans Nest Successfully

When Tribal, State and Federal Wildlife Biologists commenced discussions of reintroducing the locally extinct trumpeter swan to the Flathead Indian Reservation, they looked forward to the day when swans released into the wild would eventually nest and produce young swans, known as cygnets.

That vision was recently attained when the first trumpeter swans to nest successfully on the Reservation in decades produced eggs at a large wetland located on a Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Wildlife Management Area near Charlo. In early June, the four eggs hatched, and a few days later, the adult swans brought the cygnets out onto the water. The cygnets are growing rapidly as they feed on the rich emergent vegetation at their wetland home.

The results of another nesting attempt by a second pair of trumpeters that nested at a U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Waterfowl Production Area nearby were more disappointing. Although this pair produced at least three eggs and incubated them fully, the eggs did not hatch. Recently, Tribal Wildlife Biologists retrieved the eggs after the swans had left the nest. The adult swans remain together though, and biologists are hopeful that they will survive and produce cygnets next summer. Tribal Wildlife Program Manager Dale

Becker said that, "it is not uncommon for wild swans to fail in hatching and raising cygnets during their first attempt".

In addition, trumpeter swans occasionally commence nesting at the age of three years, but are not suc-



cessful until later. A third pair of swans also paired for the summer, but did not attempt to nest. Biologists are hopeful that this pair will survive to nest and produce young in 2005.

"This project has been a popular one with the public, both locally and elsewhere", Becker noted. "We are extremely appreciative of the assistance of local people who have warmly welcomed the swans to their ponds and wetlands and who have been very helpful in sharing their observations and concerns about the well-being of the birds with us", he said. "They are in integral part of this project."

Each of the adult swans originated at a captive propagation facility operated

by the Trumpeter Swan Fund of Jackson, Wyoming. They were released at Pablo National Wildlife Refuge and at the Crow Waterfowl Production Area in 2002.

Captive propagation efforts involved with the program have also had a successful year. One pair of swans that is housed at the Montana Waterfowl Foundation near Pablo produced seven eggs, six of

which hatched in mid-June. Production at the Trumpeter Swan Fund has also been good this year, with a large number of cygnets being produced for reintroduction projects in Wyoming, Idaho and Montana.

Trumpeter swans are the largest species of migratory waterfowl, and are one of two native swan species in North America. Adult trumpeters can reach weights of up to 32 pounds and often exhibit wingspans of 8 feet. They feed nearly exclusively upon wetland vegetation. Invertebrates also comprise a portion of their diets.

Accounts of nesting trumpeter swans in western Montana are limited. One of the earliest reporters was

Father Jean DeSmet in 1842 when he accompanied an Indian hunting party along the shores of Flathead Lake and reported the collecting of swan eggs for food. Early naturalists in other areas of the Flathead River drainage and elsewhere in western Montana reported subsequent observations of nesting trumpeter swans in the late 1800s.

The most significant cause of mortality for wild and reintroduced swans is collision with overhead utility lines, which can result in electrocution or trauma-caused mortalities. That factor is the major hurdle for biologists to overcome on the Flathead Reservation. Becker noted that nearly one third of the known mortalities of reintroduced trumpeter swans have been due to collisions with overhead lines.

Becker indicated that Tribal Wildlife Biologists have been working closely with Mission Valley Power to install swan flight diverters on lines where collisions have occurred.

Plans for the future of the trumpeter swan reintroduction include continuing captive propagation and release of swans, continuing the cooperative effort with Mission Valley Power to reduce collisions with power lines, and monitoring the released birds movements and habitat use.

Ninepipe Pond Kids Fishing Day

Despite rainy weather, more than 70 young anglers and adults turned out for the 2nd Annual Ninepipe Pond Fishing Day south of Ronan. The event featured a fishing derby for anglers age 12 and under as well as fish identification, casting lessons, fly tying and spinner making.

Ninepipe Fishing Pond, just north and west of the Ninepipe Lodge, was stocked with rainbow trout from Mt state hatcheries and Tribal Fisheries Program.

The pond is also ideal for family fishing trips. Everyone can fish, but adults 15 and older are asked to leave harvest to the kids.



Tyler Houle, 5, with his first fish.

Wildlife Babies

Newborn wildlife is irresistible, and many well-meaning people are tempted to "help" when the best thing they can do is leave the young alone. Born in May and June, many young wild animals may appear abandoned and helpless, or seem to be lost.

"Young wildlife are rarely helpless or abandoned, more often the mother is only gone temporarily or is intentionally staying a short distance away to avoid attracting attention to her young," said Dale Becker, Tribal Wildlife program manager.

If you do discover an apparently abandoned wild animal just leave it alone. Just "touching or picking them up may cause the mother to reject them because of the human scent. Birds, however, cannot smell well, and fledglings may be carefully returned to their nest," Becker said.

The Tribal Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation, and Conservation should be notified of young wildlife that has been orphaned because the mother was killed.

According to Sergeant Pablo J. Espinoza, Tribal Conservation Program it is illegal to possess or remove from the wild any game animal, game bird, songbird, furbearer or bird of prey, and fines may be levied for such violations.

If you find young wildlife that is orphaned because the mother was killed contact the Tribal Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation, and Conservation at 675-2700, extension

Ferry Basin Elk and Little Money Sheep Permits

The drawing for Ferry Basin Elk hunt and Little Money Bighorn Sheep hunt permits was held on August 5th at the Tribal Council Chambers. The drawing was conducted through a computerized random drawing.

Hunting elk in the Ferry Basin Wildlife Management Unit and bighorn sheep in the Little Money Wildlife Management Unit is restricted under the hunting,

fishing and recreation regulations for tribal members.

Permits are valid for one elk or one bighorn sheep only. Hunters are required to have their permit and tribal I.D. on their person while hunting.

This year's quota will remain the same as last year with the exception that bighorn sheep ewes increased from 25 to 45 permits, the quota for bighorn rams will remain at 6

permits and the quota for cow or calf is 25, these permits will be available to Tribal members 16 and older the second week of August at the Natural Resources Department. After the quota is reached the antlerless portion of the Ferry Basin hunt will be closed.

For more information on the Wildlife Management special hunt permits draw call 883-2888 ext. 7278.

Grizzly Bear Management Area Closure

McDonald Peak and the surrounding areas in the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness is closed to recreational activities on July 15 and will remain closed until October 1. This area known as the Grizzly Bear Management Zone is closed annually because of Grizzly bear Activity.

Grizzly bears gather in this area because of ladybug

beetles and army cutworm moths that concentrate in the areas during the months of July, August, and September. This closure will insure human safety and allow grizzly bears to use this important area during the summer.

The closure allows bears to remain at high elevations longer each year and gain additional weight, which may result in fewer human

confrontations when the grizzly bears go to lower elevation sites in the fall. All trails within the areas are posted and patrolled by Tribal Fish & Game Enforcement Officers,

The 10,000-acre closure is only ten percent of the Mission Range and is essentially without trails.

Caution should be exercised when visiting the



A People of Vision

Natural Resources
Department
Clayton Matt,
Department Head

NRD DIVISIONS:
Fish, Wildlife, Recreation
and Conservation
Manager: Tom McDonald
Environmental Protection
Manager: Rich Janssen
Water Division
Manager: Bill Foust

Polson Office
301 Main Street
PO Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855
Phone: 406-883-2888
FAX: 406-883-2896
Email:
germainew@cskt.org
www.cskt.org

Information & Education
Specialist
Germaine White



Get the Lead Out

It is time to get the lead out of our lakes, rivers and fishing tackle. Lead is a toxic metal that has adverse affects on the nervous and reproductive systems of animals. Anglers buy and use millions of pounds of lead fishing tackle every year. Some of the tackle gets lost and ends up in our lakes and rivers where it is ingested by wildlife, causing their death. A 1/16-ounce lead sinker can kill a loon within a few weeks.

There is a nationwide ban on the use of lead in gasoline and paint to protect human health, so perhaps its time to get the lead out of our fishing tackle to protect our feathered friends. Waterfowl hunters can no longer use lead shot on most wildlife management areas.

When lead sinkers and jigs are lost through broken lines, they sink to the lake bottom and can be inadvertently ingested by birds. Deaths of bald eagles, geese, ducks, great blue herons and other water birds have been documented. Most research has centered on loons. Ingesting lead fishing tackle is the number one killer of loons. One study showed that up to 85 percent of loon mortality was the result of ingesting lead fishing tackle.

Most water birds scoop up small pebbles from the lake bottom to use in their gizzards to grind up food. Small lead sinkers and jigs resemble pebbles, so they get ingested into the bird's gizzard, resulting in the bird's death.

Sometimes loons will eat a fish that has swallowed a lead sinker or jig. One study found that two-thirds of all dead loons had some type of fishing tackle in their stomachs.

Anglers have a number of alternatives to lead in fishing tackle. Several manufacturers now make substitute fishing tackle using tin, steel, brass, tungsten-nickel alloys and bismuth. Since most of these materials are lighter than lead, you frequently have to upsize your sinker or jig to get the same weight and sinking characteristic. Local vendors that carry non lead alternatives are Ronan Sports and Western and Wal Mart.

NRD EMPLOYEE FOCUS MARLENE MCDANAL

Marlene McDanal, a 2003 Salish Kootenai College graduate in environmental sciences is the tribe's Brownfield coordinator, a position she has held since last November.

McDanal's main connection is with the federal, state, local government agencies, and the public for problems and questions regarding Open Dumps, Underground Storage

Tanks, Solid Waste, Hazardous Waste, and other potential Brownfields sites or issues. The position's duties include the collection of data, project planning, and directing the implementation of all aspects of the program that include Solid Waste, Hazardous Waste, Open Dumps, Underground Storage Tanks, and Brownfields.



McDanal is a loving grandmother and likes to listen to Rock and Roll Music.

McDanal states, "I like my job and am looking forward to protecting the environment in